

15

ESSAY

AN
ESSAY
ON THE
DUNCIAD.

(Price Six-Pence.)

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A N
E S S A Y
O N T H E
D U N C I A D
A N
Heroick Poem.

Some judge of Authors NAMES, not Works, and then
Nor praise nor blame the Writings, but the MEN.

POPE'S *Essay on Criticism*.

'Tis best sometimes your Censure to restrain,
And charitably let the DULL be vain:
Your Silence there, is better than your Spite;
For who can Rail so long as they can Write?

Ibid.

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. ROBERTS, near the Oxford-Arms
in Warwick-Lane. MDCCXXVIII.

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1744.

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Scope of the Author been allowable
to the Title, the Poem would have been
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buse of the Poem, and many ho-
norable Gentlemen, and good Scho-

lars. Who would expect at least
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dead disturb'd in their Graves; nor

IT has been observ'd by
Mr. *Addison*, that when a
Man cannot refute his Ad-
versary, the shortest way is
to libel him; and to endea-

vour at the making his Person odious,
when he cannot represent his Notions

as

as absurd: Which Remark, I think, with all Justness may be apply'd to the Drift of the DUNCIAD. Had the whole Scope of the Author been answerable to the Title, the Poem would have been in another Form; but as it is, we are entertain'd with nothing else but an abusive Satyr upon a great many honourable Gentlemen, and good Scholars. Who would not expect at least the common Rules of Modesty and Decency would have been kept up in this celebrated Piece? But instead of that, we see nothing else but Scandal and malicious Contempt dispers'd throughout the whole Poem; we see the greatest Men run down, the very Dead disturb'd in their Graves; nor could the venomous Pen refrain even from the fair Sex, who thought no harm, but their *Nakedness must be expos'd to View*, and they must be set up as a publick Mark of Contempt and Raillery.

Who.

Whoever the Author is, he certainly must be a Man who has no great Regard to Decency and common Civility; one who is abandon'd to the worst of Principles, feeding on Malice and inglorious Envy. Far be it from me to enter upon a Wordy War, and upon calling Names, such as *Scoundrel* and *Blockhead*; which I observe the Author of *the Compleat Key to the DUNCIAD* has practis'd: But certain I am, that Piece was never the Employment of a Gentleman, and much less of Mr. POPE, upon whom the World is pleas'd to father it. I am sure he has too much good Nature to engage in any such Matter; his Reputation is too well establish'd, to be branded with the Name of the Author of the DUNCIAD: Is it consistent with Mr. POPE's Character, to lay aside all Candor and Decency, and turn Lampooner? Certainly they must be mistaken, who could

ever

ever imagine him to be the Author of so scandalous a Libel.

Since Mr. P O P E has obtain'd such an universal Name over all *England*, and the neighbouring States, so that even Foreigners, as it is very rightly observ'd, have translated him into their own Language; is it consistent with Reason, that he should debase himself so much, as to vent his Scandal upon those very Men, who, for the most part, are his Admirers, and so run the risk of losing that vast Reputation, which he has so firmly rooted into the Hearts of all the World?

I must own, the Author, whoever he is, has aim'd at something of an Imitation of Mr. P O P E's way of Writing, which is only peculiar to himself: I can't say quite throughout, but here and there you may trace some Glimmerings of his Fancy, and some Structure of his Verse.

What

Whatever is meant in the Preface to the DUNCIAD, by saying that every Week for these two Months last past, the Town has been persecuted with Pamphlets, Advertisements, Letters and Weekly Essays, not only against the Wit and Writings, but against the Character and Person of Mr. POPE; I can't but think it must be a forg'd Thing, and something untrue. We know very well what Mr. Theobalds publish'd in relation to Mr. POPE; but I believe every other Mouth has been silent, except it was in his Praise.

The Author, (as I said before,) has endeavour'd to imitate Mr. POPE's Way of writing, as you may observe in this Verse, where

*Keen, hollow Winds howl through the
bleak Recesses.*

Book I. Line 19.

B

This

This I must own is a very good Imitation, and represents the Image; but yet one may easily discern the Bristol Stone from the Diamond.

Milton's Description of the Moon rising in *Clouded Majesty*, is applied well enough to DULNESS in the 33d Line. Just afterwards, her Guardian Virtues are drawn up in very good Order to support her Throne.

*Fierce Champion Fortitude, that knows
no Fears
Of Hisses, Blows, or Want, or Loss of Ears:
Calm Temperance, whose Blessings those
partake
Who hunger and who thirst for scribbling
sake:
Prudence, whose Glass presents th' ap-
proaching Jayl:*

*Poetick Justice, with her lifted Scale,
Where in nice Balance, Truth with
Gold she weighs,*

And solid Pudding against empty Praise.

After

After the Author has laid his Mayors
and Sheriffs asleep, he comes in with a
Rub upon the Poets, where he says

*But pensive Poets painful Vigils keep,
Sleepless themselves, to give their Readers
Sleep.*

Line 87.

This, in my Opinion, is a Pun unworthy
Mr. POPE.

In another Place, which I forgot to
mention, where he's speaking of the
Cave of Poetry, he says,

*Hence springs each weekly Muse, the
living Boast
Of Curl's chaste Press, and Lintott's
rubrick Post.*

Line 27.

If I be'nt mistaken, this is a sort of a Banter upon the *Grub-street* Poets: but why *Lintott* should be brought in, I know not, whose *Rubrick Post* I fancy has been honour'd before now with the Title of Mr. *POPE'S Poems*; who I believe has as little to do with the Cave of Poverty, as any of the Fraternity.

*She saw in Norton all his Father shine;
And Euden eke out Blackmore's endless
Line.*

Line 91, 92.

I don't see any Reason, why Sir *Richard Blackmore* should be hoored at so often as he is in this Poem, who in his later Performances has shew'd as much Judgment and Learning, as most of 'em all.

*He roll'd his Eyes that witness'd huge
Dismay,*

Line 105.

Why

Why certainly this Bard must make but a hideous Figure, when he's compar'd to the Devil in rolling his Eyes around. For this is a pretty good Imitation of *Milton* in his Description of Satan.

*A Gothic Vatican ! of Greece and Rome
Well-purg'd, and worthy Westley, Watts,
and Brome.*

Why the Author should change these Names to *Withers*, *Quarles*, and *Blome*, I can't imagine, unless (if the true Author be Mr. P O P E, which I am very unwilling to believe) he was conscious of the wrong he had done that worthy Gentleman, who dug so deep for him in *Eustathius*, and supply'd him with almost all the Critical Notes for his *Iliad* in *Homer*; beside the Employment he follow'd, as Journeyman to Mr. P O P E, in translating the *Odysssey*.

How

*How with less reading than makes Felons
 'scape,
 Less human Genius than God gives an Ape;
 Less Thanks to France, and none to Rome
 or Greece,
 A past, vamp'd, future, old, reviv'd, new
 Piece,
 'Twixt Plautus, Fletcher, Congreve, and
 Corneille,
 Can make a Cibber, Johnson, or Ozell.*

Pray what have these three Play-
 wrights done? Have they scandaliz'd or
 abus'd Mr. POPE (if he is the Author) in
 any manner? Why don't Mr. Cibber
 understand Greek and Latin? Why sure
 you won't make him as ignorant as his
 own Sir Francis Wronghead. This fal-
 ling upon a poor Man without any
 Reason, makes me believe it can't chal-
 lenge Mr. POPE for its Author, who,
 I am positive, bears more Regard to-
 wards the Sanctity of Character, than
 to use a Gentleman at this Rate.

God

*God save King Tibbald ! Grubstreet Alleys
roar.*

Line 246.

That's downright *Grubstreet* ; 'tis fit
Grubstreet should make much of it, and
sound it thro' all her winding Alleys:
I fancy if Mr POPE had handled that
Thought, he'd have made something bet-
ter of it.

The Second Book of the DUNCIAD
opens with an Assembly of the Sons of
Dulness, where the Author introduces
Men of the highest Rank and Profes-
sion :

*A motley Mixture ! in long Wigs, in Bags,
In Silks, in Crapes, in Garters, and in Rags.*

Book II. L. 3.

Here we see Gentlemen, Beaus, Di-
vines, and Knights of the Garter, all
*Hail-fellows well met with the Grub-
street Rags.*

He

He tells you before, that they flock'd
in so fast that they *unpeopl'd half the*
Land: by which he gives us to under-
stand, I suppose, that most part of *Eng-*
land are Blockheads, without any Ex-
ception to Quality or Character.

All who true DUNCES in her Cause
appear'd,
And all who knew those DUNCES to
reward.

Line 7.

What a scurrilous Couplet is here! In
the first Place the Author calls Men of
Letters all DUNCES, and then he falls
foul upon our great Patrons of Learn-
ing, and gives them the same scan-
dalous Usage.

A Church collects the SAINTS of
Drury-Lanc.

Line 14.

Here's

Here's Blasphemy and Disloyalty to the highest Degree, where he seems to intimate, that Queen A N N E built the New Church in the *Strand* on purpose for the Reception of all the Strumpets of *Drury-Lane*, whom he is pleas'd to call by the Name of S A I N T S.

The Author describing the Race betwixt C—ll and L—tt, has these Lines.

Full in the middle Way there stood a Lake

Which C—ll's Corinna chanc'd that Morn to make;

Here fortun'd C—ll to slide.

Line 53.

Which I think is a very good Imitation of *Virgil*, where speaking of the Race betwixt *Nisus* and *Euryalus*, and the rest, he says as follows:

*levi cum sanguine Nifus,
Labitur infelix; cæsis ut forte juvenis,
Fusus humum, viridesque super madefa-
cerat herbas.*

The only Difference between the Ro-
man Racer and the *English*, was that
the one slipp'd down in Bull's Blood, the
other in a Sir-Reverence: but however,
C——ll had the Proverb on his Side,
sh—n Luck's good Luck, for he stunk
along, you see afterwards, and won the
Race. But I must needs own that such
a Fall would vex a Gentleman, you know,
and set him to Prayers immediately; but,
poor Man, he had not much Time to
make a long Prayer; I think it isn't
above three or four Lines: and I fancy
there's very few who would ever have
thought of any Prayers in such a nasty
Condition as he was, except himself;
for you must know he's a very reli-
gious, chaste, good Man; and very
likely,

likely, if he had not said that Prayer,
he'd have never won the Race.

To move, to raise, to ravish every
Heart

With Shakespear's Nature, or with John-
son's Art,
Let others aim——

These last Lines are another very good

Imitation of Mr POPE's excellent Pro-
logue to the Tragedy of *Cato*.

The DIVING, I fancy, is a Game
which no body could ever think of, but
the Author of the DUNCIAD; how-
ever, it is work'd up admirably well, and
comes very near the Spirit of Mr. POPE:
especially in those Lines where he de-
scribes E——n rising up again, which
are as follow:

*Sudden a Burst of Thunder shook the
Flood:*

*Lo! E——n rose, tremendous all in
Mud!*

*Shaking the Horrors of his sable Brows,
And each ferocious Feature grim with
Ooze.*

*Greater he looks, and more than Mortal
stares,*

*That thus the Wonders of the Deep
declares.*

Line 280.

Then comes the gentler Exercise to
lull all the Senses asleep by a magick
Art, which, as the Author very well
observes, the Cambridge Sophs are best
at; not to mention the three pert Tem-
plars, that came not at all inferior to
the former in their Talents and Taste.

————— *And in one lazy Tone
Thro' the long, heavy, painful Page, drawl
on.*

And

And then again:
*At every Line they stretch, they yawn, they
 doze.*

This very well imitates the slow Drowsiness in which they proceed: It is impossible for any one, who has a poetical Ear, to read these Lines, without perceiving the Heaviness that lags in the Verse, to imitate the Action which it describes.

The Simile of the Pines is very just, and adapted well to the Subject. There's another too, which I forgot to mention in its place, which is that of the Dab-chick waddling thro' the Copse; 'tis in the Race between C——ll and L——tt.

*As when a Dab-chick waddles thro' the
 Copse,
 On Legs and Wings, ^{and} it flies, and wades,
 and hops.*

Line 47.

And

And all was hush'd, as Folly's self lay dead.

Line 373.

In Imitation of that Line in *Dryden's*
Ind. Emp.

All things are hush'd, as Nature's self lay
dead.

Ascend this Hill, whose cloudy Point, &c.
Book III. Line 59.

I suppose the Author, when he wrote
this, had his Eye upon that Place in
Milton, where the Angel takes *Adam*
upon an high Mountain, and shews him
all the Country round, and tells him of
things that shall come to pass here-
after.

From the strong Fate of Drams if thou
get free,
*Another Dursey *** shall sing in thee.*

This

This is another very good Imitation
of that admir'd Passage in the 6th Book
of *Virgil*, where speaking of young
Marcellus, the Poet thus delivers himself
in the Words of *Anchises*.

*Hæu! miserande Puer! si qua fata as-
pera rumpas,*

Tu MARCELLUS eris.

B——th in his cloudy *Tabernacle* shrin'd,
On grinning *Dragons* C——r mounts the
Wind.

Line 215.

Alluding to the Parts these Gentlemen
act in the Farce call'd *Dr. Faustus*.

*Already Opera prepares the Way,
The sure Forerunner of her gentle Sway.*

Line 255.

This alludes to the *BEGGAR'S OPERA*;
but however dull this Piece may seem
to some, there's not one of 'em, I be-
lieve,

lieve, but would be glad to be Master
of what Mr. G-y got by his DUL-
NESS.

*The Stage shall stand, ensure it but from
Fire.*

Line 261.

Alluding to the Stage's once taking Fire,
as they were acting *Dr. Faustus*.

*This, this is—He foretold by ancient
Rhymes,*

*Th' Augustus born to bring Saturnian
Times.*

Line 266.

Imitation of *Virgil's*

*Hic vir, hic est, tibi quem promitti so-
pius audis,*

*Augustus Caesar ——— aurea condet
Secula.*

Let

Let there be Darknefs.

Line 281.

Mr. *Curll*, in his *Compleat Key to the DUNCIAD*, takes notice, that this is a great Piece of Blasphemy, and in Ridicule of the Scripture; for my part I see nothing in it: sure a Man may embelish his Poem with a little Scripture-Language now and then, or it's very hard.

All that I have to say concerning the Poem, is, that I have very great Reason to believe it has not Mr. POPE for the Author, as some People imagine. I must own, it is very full of beautiful Images, and is pretty much in the Manner of Mr. POPE's Way of writing; but then, in a great many Places, it has so much Ill-Nature and Malice, which is quite the contrary to Mr. POPE's Character, that I am oblig'd to think otherwise.

D

This

This P O E M, in my Opinion, looks as if it was wrote with a great deal of Malice and Envy: it seems as if the Author was afraid others should rise above him, and so he endeavours to blast their Characters. We can't have a better Idea of this sort of Envy, than by what Bishop *Hall* says; whose Words I shall here transcribe:

“ An envious Man, *says he*, feeds on
 “ others Evils, and hath no Disease but
 “ his Neighbour's Welfare; whatsoever
 “ God doth for him, he cannot be happy
 “ in Company; and if he was put
 “ to chuse, whether he would rather
 “ have Equals in a common Felicity, or
 “ Superiors in Misery, he would de-
 “ murr upon the Election. You shall
 “ have him ever enquiring into the E-
 “ states of his Equals and Betters; where-
 “ in he is not more desirous to hear all,
 “ than loth to hear any thing over-good:
 “ whom he dares not openly back-bite,
 “ nor

" nor wound with a direct Censure, he
 " strikes smoothly with an over-cold
 " Praise; when his Equal should rise
 " to Honour, he strives against it un-
 " seen, and suborneth Obstacles: no
 " Man is safe from his malignant Cen-
 " sure, no Action from his jealous Con-
 " struction".

Now according to this, I can't pos-
 sibly reconcile my self to the Belief of
 Mr. POPE's being the Author of this
 Poem. I wish some abler Person than
 my self, would be at the Trouble of
 examining this Poem somewhat stricter
 than I have, and then let him give out
 his Opinion: for I would not have it ever
 be said, that Mr. POPE, who is the
 Honour of our *English* Nation, was the
 Author of such a notorious Libel.

FINIS.

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